

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PRAGUE 000499

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/05/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [EZ](#)

SUBJECT: GWOT ASSESSMENT: POST FEEDBACK FOR CZECH REPUBLIC

REF: STATE 60796

Classified By: Political Officer Kimberly C. Krhounek for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) The Czech Republic, despite the weak coalition government that came into power after the June 2002 elections, has been a staunch supporter of the GWOT and has responded admirably to USG requests for troop contributions to Iraq and Afghanistan, and is actively providing economic, humanitarian and training assistance as well. In addition, intelligence cooperation is close and very cooperative on all levels. In response to refTel request, Embassy Prague provides the following assessment of GWOT successes to date, challenges to address, and proposed solutions.

-----  
SUCSESSES TO DATE - IRAQ & AFGHANISTAN  
-----

2. (C) Beginning with the war in Iraq, the Czechs became an early member of the Coalition and were at one time the 4th largest contributor of troops to Iraq. They started with a 400-member nuclear-biological-chemical (NBC) defense contingent which was stationed in Kuwait and Iraq during and after "Operation Iraqi Freedom" war operations. That mission was followed by the six-month deployment of a 600-person Czech field hospital, which treated more than 8,000 coalition forces and Iraqi civilians in the Basra area between May and October 2003. Most recently, the Czechs have maintained the deployment of nearly 100 Czech military police stationed near Basra, who have been engaged in training Iraqi security forces since the beginning of October 2003. The mandate for the military police was twice extended at our request; the first extension covered the period from December 2004 through the Iraqi elections and aftermath, and the second one extended the military police through 2005. The MOD is already talking about extending the MPs into 2006. The Czechs have also stepped up to the plate on the NATO Training Mission-Iraq, detailing five MPs to Baghdad and approving a USD 200,000 contribution to the Trust Fund to support this mission. A 10-member field surgical team continues to work with the British Field Hospital as well, and is expected to stay in Basra until December 2005. Training of Iraqi army soldiers in the Czech Republic has also begun, with 100 Iraqi soldiers taking the training during the 2005 calendar year.

3. (C) The Czech Republic has also contributed troops to Afghanistan to assist in GWOT efforts there. The Czechs began in 2003 with the deployment of 15 specialists in explosive ordinance disposal (EOD), weather and engineering to the NATO ISAF mission and have maintained their continuous presence at the Bagram airfield ever since. They expect to take over the Bagram airfield operations next year (number of support troops needed to fulfill this mandate is still unknown). Between March and September 2004, the GOCR also deployed a 112-man Special Operations Force company in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Czechs are currently contributing 40-man reconnaissance unit to the German-led Provincial Reconstruction Team; a deployment which began early this year.

4. (C) In addition to troop contributions, the Czech government has been very proactive on providing assistance for the reconstruction of Iraq and support for building new government institutions, which are critical fields to help stabilize the country. Early on, they detailed 19 Czech experts to various ministries of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), and still maintain one at the Ministry of Interior. They are also active in civilian assistance and have contributed to training more than 200 Iraqi judges at the CEELI Institute in Prague, have brought Iraqi diplomats for training at the Czech diplomatic academy and 10 Czech police instructors participate in police training in Jordan as part of a two-year project ongoing since November 2003. The Czech government is helping to sponsor a number of Iraqi students pursuing graduate economic studies at the Prague campus of the Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education (CERGE-EI). It has donated more than USD 1.4 million to humanitarian assistance in Iraq through various NGO's including UNHCR and WFP. They also provided free medical care to 26 Iraqi children with serious medical problems; these children were flown to the Czech Republic at the cost of approximately USD 500,000 in 2003 and 2004. USD 480,000 has been used for transformation assistance, including providing equipment for the southern Iraq police

academy of Az Zubayr, specialized study stays for Iraqi experts in sewage treatment, pump stations, irrigation, traffic control, etc. The GOCR also provided assistance to facilitate Iraqi citizens living in the Czech Republic to vote in the January elections. Finally, the GOCR has funded programs to protect Iraqi cultural heritage (USD 40,000) and development cooperation projects (USD 560,000).

15. (C) Post has successfully used the International Visitor (IV) and Voluntary Visitor (VolVis) programs to promote greater knowledge and awareness of terrorism and terrorist-related issues. In 2004, Post supported the participation of a senior Czech investigator in the VolVis regional project for Europe on "Terrorist Financing Issues," as well as a 6-person IV group project on law enforcement that will help prosecutors and investigators combat the criminal elements that are often associated with the international terrorist networks. Post's candidates for 2005 show the same commitment to expanding knowledge and awareness in these fields, with 2 participants attending an ITT on "Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism" and another 2 candidates attending MRP's on "US-European Security Issues" and "US Foreign Policy Challenges."

16. (C) Post also has an active, successful Public Affairs outreach that address various aspects of the war on terror, including issues related to Iraq, Afghanistan, and the role of NATO in the Greater Middle East. These have included digital conferences with government officials and think tank experts on military action in Iraq, US priorities for NATO in preparation for the Prague and Istanbul summits, and NATO's role in Afghanistan. Visiting speakers from institutions such as the American Enterprise Institute, Congressional Research Service and Washington Institute for Near East Studies have participated in conferences and met with Czech officials, academics and media to address U.S. policy actions in Iraq, Iran, Middle East and legal aspects on counterterrorism and the threat of Al-Qaeda. PAS has sponsored several American journalists who cover the Middle East and Iraq for programs with Czech journalists and students, and discussions organized in cooperation with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Our American Information Center has organized panel discussions with both U.S. and Czech participants on developments in Iraq on the anniversary of the war, Iraqi media and Iraqi elections. The Ambassador and other Embassy officials have participated in media roundtables and conferences related to the GWOT, and PAS has placed a number of commentaries in the main Czech dailies on this subject. In addition, we have provided financial and logistical support for two annual conferences organized by the Program of Atlantic Security Studies on "NATO and the Greater Middle East" and "Energy Security," at both of which USG officials participated, presenting U.S. policy objectives on issues related to combatting terrorism.

-----  
CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS  
-----

17. (C) Both the rigid Czech legal structure and political realities mean that it is easier for the GOCR to deploy troops when there is an authorizing UN Security Council resolution or NATO decision (although they have acted without it when needed). The Czechs are committed Atlanticists and NATO membership remains popular among the Czech public and politicians. For example, the most recent extension of troops in Iraq was facilitated by the possibility that that all the MPs would be brought eventually into the NATO Training Mission; the GOCR has already told us that their ability to smoothly extend the military police into 2006 depends in part on securing a firm NATO decision to bring the existing Czech operation near Basra into the NTM. Likewise it was important in the last extension that the UK publicly took the lead, with the U.S. working behind the scenes.

18. (C) An obstacle to committing greater numbers of Czech troops to overseas missions is the cost that transporting and re-supplying several overseas deployments at the same time places on the MOD budget. The Czechs must either contract or rely on the USG to move their troops; although they are hoping to acquire American-built C-130J aircraft within the next couple of years to assist in this area. The USG has been able to help defray these costs through reimbursement, or to provide the needed airlift, but not in every case. The Czechs also have a doctrinal limit of deploying only 1000 personnel with rotation at any given time. Their on-going commitments to Iraq and Afghanistan, together with deployments in the Balkans, and in support of the UN, place them continuously at or near this ceiling.

19. (C) One of the best means at our disposal for urging action and maintaining the long term commitments is conducting regular consultations between senior-level officials in Washington and Prague, such as the recent visit by Deputy Secretary. The more we can maintain contact with

Czech officials as "equal partners," the greater effect we have on pressing decisions of the moment. This was clearly evident when the first request for an extension of the military police unit in Basra came up, following a reorganization of the government under a relatively new Prime Minister. A telephone call from President Bush urging the extension was an important factor in getting the new PM solidly behind the extension and pushing it through Parliament in a rapid manner. In addition, maintaining an active public affairs outreach to Czech decision-makers and public, has been instrumental in explaining U.S. policy objectives.

Visit Prague's Classified Website:

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/prague/index.cfm>

CABANISS